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ALBERT PARIS LEARY

Charles Williams' London

ALWAYS the same figure on the same bridge
empty of sound, half visible, the fog
hissing around him like escaping gas:
whether coming or going, whether pausing
in uncertainty or in deliberation,
in angered silence or in dumb appeal,
whether waiting blinded, or surveying
the oiled Thames; whether a projection
from a time-fault on the stiff propped shadows,
or a ghost gathering from the shreds of mist
clothes of flesh conservative and spectral—
it is impossible to tell. The same,
always—neither afternoon nor evening,
neither the low desperate noon, the grey,
nor the choked night not easily brought to morning,
but the objective evacuated moment
stripped of the insubstantial and of flux,
when London rising from the grip of England,
for a moment neither splendid nor dishonoured,
is the City, that City, neither Rome
nor Byzantium, nor Jerusalem,
but the blindingly envisioned state,
the blended essence of the three, a City
not real or imagined, but envisioned.
And always in this complex instant, always
the same figure on the same bridge,
neither accusing nor approving, caught
perhaps, not like a fly in amber, passive,
but like the bullet captured by the camera
in slow motion, immobilised on a screen.
Whether meditating, whether eager
to be met, exposed in the moment's trap;
whether waiting patiently for darkness,
or in the ecstasy of union, silenced—
this much can be discerned: this is his City
filling the mist in which he disappears.

The Letter

AFTER the days of silence
My lover wrote to me.
A dead flower was the letter
He posted over the sea,
A wild white violet pressed with his thought
Made all the words for me.

After the months of silence
My lover wrote to me.
Three stones were in the letter
He posted over the sea.
I could not shape them into words;
The stones were riddles to me.

After the years of silence
My lover writes to me.
His words are lost in the profligate wind
Across the ship-less sea.
But the postman knocks on my heart no more
Since silence entered me.

ALAN BROWNJOHN

Unhurt through Fire

WHEN all these towering dreams are burned away,
In the sweet soil of ashes shall we grow;
Endure through fire to break the chastised earth
And clamber airwards from the roots below.

The waking sun will light such ruined lands,
And the wind be stern in that narrow day,
But we shall nourish on its silent air
When all these towering dreams are burned away;

Where the broad flame has gone, shall rise and branch,
Who lay, once, waiting in the seeds beneath;
Thrive safely on that acre, who have come
Unhurt through fire to break the chastised earth;

And in that calm no further fire can reach
We shall restore a singleness, who know
We can but flower grafted each on each
In the sweet soil of ashes where we grow.

JAMES REEVES

Mrs. B

I KNOW—who does not?—Mrs. B,
Flushed from the ritual cup of tea.
The cigarette, the symptoms, and the chat,
The black serge skirt and nodding hat—
By these all ladies know
The gallant, tempest-battered crow,
This talkative, good-natured ghoul.

To every Mrs. A her Mrs. B.
All ladies cool, all ladies fresh and cool
Hear her disreputable story
Of thieving tradesmen, sick relations,
Of suicide by gas, and operations.
She is their grim *memento mori.*

Under the shadow of her trailing skirt
Life's diurnal grease and dirt
Skulk about the kitchen floor.
Every Saturday at nine
She makes, on Dr. Death's front door,
The brass plate and the huge brass knocker shine.
All ladies cool, all ladies cool and mortal—
God keep them far from that conclusive portal.

December Letter: *The Gift*

POETS have talked of flowers fading; the Greeks
called no man happy, fearing the goddess who breaks
our joy in life like a stick for the fire that warms
readers of the sad legend of love's harms.

I talked like them; at evening by that fire
thought of the clear glass broken, the fragments swept
to darkness and dust; saw life as a moving stair
down to the realms of darkness where no man slept.

These images are hypnotic: someone must snap
the crooked spell that holds the mind in a grip.
The heart dies in an unlit house. You took
the trouble to find the single door, and knock.

Let others now consider broken things
and petals falling in autumn. I have done
with images of fading fire. Day brings
the quiet joy, your eyes, the tireless sun.

Night tells of death no more: unfathomed sky
holds an infinity of stars that move
over the waiting earth like future joy
with orbit fixed by focal points of love.

Time and eternity no deserts are
(as poets have thought) but natural gardens where
travail and peace with light and dark succeed.
Autumn does not bring death but living seed.

I cannot find, I who have often found
words for my will and images for grief,
the simple phrases that I want. They sound
half insincere, involved. The curling leaf,

the sunlight on the stair, you, things that grow
or come to be in nature, are far better
than all that I can write, but you who know
and pardon, understand that this my letter

gives all it can, the truth. You will not miss
beauty I tried to give in giving this.

GEORGE MACBETH

Salvador Dali

GOLD watches crawl with grubs: drawers protrude,
Rifled of handkerchiefs, from bellies, breasts,
Buttocks of terrified, raped girls. What shrewd,
Furious draughtsman's embryos and pests,

Voluptuously detailed, make van Eyck
Seem amateur and vague? Myopic flair
Bleached white this skeleton that rides a bike,
Impeccably *trompe-l'oeil,* through vivid air.

Now elephants on stilts, metal that droops,
Waggons becoming towns they travel to,
Executives on beaches, boys with hoops
Arrest our gaze, meticulous and new.

Yet later on, familiar, miniature,
When even crucifixions give the same
Air of contriving, striving to allure,
The tragedy seems curiously tame.

Weird gimmicks please: but gradually grown
Too obviously shocking, thinly slick,
Each landscape profile, poached-egg telephone,
Seen in perspective, shrivels to a trick.

KATHRINE SORLEY WALKER

Stage Make-up

FROM this one face may spring a hundred flowers
rooted in greasepaint and an artist's thought:
strange growths of beauty, lacquered, sequined, lined
with phosphorescent light; for magic caught
by skilful fingers, carefully designed,
transforms the features of a modern man
into a faun, a king of fairyland.

Nor only legendary blossoms rise
from this rich ground, for here the years can meet
in living character—pale mediæval prince
turn Georgian beau, or murderer to priest.
A line, a wig, lips of a different hue—
and all a lamp which from within has light;
a counterfeit, and yet more true than truth;
false coin, yet none fresh minted is more bright.

P. J. HELM

Philoctetes

THE sun's great face, red-bearded,
Upon the sand and on my flesh
Now burns, and burns again.

Blue cupric crystals grinding,
The sea reflects the sun; the sharp
Blue glass exacts my pain.

The crystals of the sun, the
Revealed and steely edge between
Each shadow and the heat,

Dissect like razors little
Unnoticed veins that beat behind
My bloodshot eyes. Defeat

That gums the thick air, leaving
No movement there, yet lets me see
My broken words return

With armoured feet that stumble
From desert graves—the dry and dead—
To stare on me. I burn.

My traitor flesh corrupts, and
The flies that dropt their eggs remain
To clot my blood. The dim

Sun drops. The sky bleeds purple
Across my bones, while through my skull
The moonbright fishes swim.

ERICA MARX

Image d'Ennui

OUT in the evening sun a woman stands
Her shadow black and single on the sands;
With mind unpeopled and remote, she dreams
Of distant towns in winter and the blur
Of traffic crawling in unpatterned streams.
Touching on nothing, nothing touching her,
Alone, unloving of herself she stands,
Her mouth, her breasts, the movement of her hands,
None of them part of her. There lie between
The spirit's aching and the body's ease,
Mid-way between the looking and the seen,
A thousand thousand other hours like these:
Closures of autumn days, in pinioned breath—
That bring all life a little nearer death.

MICHAEL HAMBURGER

Woman at a Window

SHE opens wide the window into Spring,
Abstracting sunshine from a dirty wall,
A dog, a housefront, makes it plausible;
Waits till, provoked, the travelled breezes tell
The vaguest reminiscence of a smell
That's neither tar nor cabbage; before long
Sifts seasonal music out: a blackbird thrills
Above the buses and pneumatic drills. . . .

She veils her vision, wonders at the year
Clenched like a fist all centripetal winter
Now suddenly relaxed, a tapered hand.
Imagined buds explode, the pavements ring
With turmoil of a secret burgeoning;
The city reels and cracks. She leaves it there,
Leans on the sill and launches on the air
A golden boat, a keel to cut the tide,
Sail to the breezes yields her billowed hair:
And all is ocean. . . .
Oh, but she cannot ride
Those reefs, the roof-tops, and so near to land
Feels age and gravity, deflects their laws,
Creates an orchard in the window-box,
Herself a shepherdess whose flocks may graze
Between the blossoming trees. . . .
A door-latch clicks,
The neighbour's in. 'Shepherd? Shepherd without sheep,
Farmer who ploughs and sows but may not reap,
True metropolitan.' And all is lost,
A room her pastoral island, stalks and sticks,
Last year's geraniums shrivelled on its coast;
No wilderness even, but the world of clocks,
Each breath a tick . . . She pulls herself together,
Dreading his chime, forestalls him: "Lovely weather!"—

No need: he's gone. But she, grown penny-wise,
Drinks a last draught of daylight, weans her eyes,
Closes the window, fastens it, withdraws.

GIDEON CLARK

Portrait

IN her kitchen, in her bed,
Wholesomeness itself is she:
Not too fevered in the blood,
Granting passion its just fee,
Cool and sane, and in her eyes
Mockery's enticing light,
While about the folded lips,—
Closed but not unyielding-tight,—
Loiter shades of sunny thought,
Laughter past and smiles to be,
All good humour on her brow,
With something noble, something free.
English of the middle shires,
Where summer-dreaming rivers wind
Through pastures laced with meadow-sweet:
English in her temperate mind,
In the honeyed heart of her.
Moulded of brave English earth
Like the flowers of her love;
English in her secret mirth
At all things pompous and extreme,
All stiff doctrines from afar:
Kinder than her creed is she,
And sweet as English apples are.

TOM WRIGHT

Tomorrow is another me

NOW what has happened to the day before.
It was as urgent as a whistling train,
as full of purpose as a diving plane,
but now it bumbles up and down my brain
as sleep invoking as the steady snore
of sea stroking a somnolescent shore.
A bluebottle buzzing an age green pane,
droning its drowsy praise to the far sun.
And where's the problem that defied its skill,
the paradox that was insoluble
but doesn't matter now to anyone
except the me-before-the-day-was-done
I left to brood it out. Stunted and still,
he'll never see the hatching or the kill.

Where has the minute gone and has it shed
its urgency, as I have shed its vow,
or found a thus to meet its questing how
and lure it to the passing peace of now.
Surely the eager moment is not dead,
but like a compass needle points ahead
to the full circle over the last brow.
And these, the only truths I ever knew,
the traitor truths that have become at last
the lies that were implicitly forecast
in their beginnings, can they still be true
although tomorrow is another you.

They're lined up like the numbers in a sum.
Each guarded by a slowly fading me,
the smallest fraction of my summary.
Saying, "Tomorrow is another me,"
and wondering if tomorrows ever come,
they leave me as the drum taps leave a drum
to take their stations back in memory.
And I, as I move, move on to the doubt

that I am moving through time. It may be
that I'm a tunnel and time moves through me.
I am a rock that time silts all about.
Feeling its slap, its tug, its passing break,
I stand a salty pillar in its wake.

VERNON SCANNELL

The Jealous Wife

LIKE a private eye she searches
For clues through diaries and papers,
Examines his clothing for the guilty stains
Of crimson lipstick, wicked wine
Or something biological.
And when no act of sensual
Crime at length can be surmised
She is most puzzled and surprised
To be assailed by disappointment
Not relief. Her steel intent
Is never to betray to him
The blonde and naked thoughts within
The purple bedroom of her mind;
But her resolve can never stand
The pressure of the need to know.
'Where?' she says, and 'When?' and 'Who?'
'What time?' 'What day?' The question-marks
Like heavy iron grappling-hooks
Drag him to her fantasy.
And then he cannot fail to see
Within the harem of her skull
The lovely wickednesses loll:
And so at night they softly creep,
Tap at the darkened panes of sleep;
Then white and tender glide inside
His dreams on whose delightful slope
At last her fears are justified.

B. EVAN OWEN

Immortal Moment

ETCHED on the outer margin of the mind,
Reckless of time, the pattern of a moment
Expectant waits for flaring words to find
Within the private and particular a universal element
Within the bud close-furled a macrocosmic world.

Donne could encompass it, and in the eternal
Mystique of his verse transfix the whirling dance
Of deathless souls linked close to love with all
The pointed passion of his wordy lance;
Dissect the carcase to expose the heart.

Or Botticelli paint in splendid equipoise
And semblance of suspended movement all
Such outer adjuncts as the truth employs
To veil its nakedness; a fragile wall
Of symbols that arise mandala-wise.

So might Bernini carve a fine cascade
Of formal figures gesturing at the skies,
Hub of a vast piazza with a colonnade,
And men admiring say, "How wise!
To freeze eternity in baroque statuary."

Or Bach compose a fugue around the theme,
Annihilating mediocrity in one explosive burst
Of splintered sunlight, flash a dream
To light a vision in a world accursed,
Illume the lowering skies before the music dies.

But this poor hack, this penny poet, no more
Could pluck from air a plunging hawk
Than cage within his words the wonder at the core;
The guardians of the mystery will balk
Attempts at larceny by suspect artistry;
Protest that naught imperfect will entice,
"You have experienced! Will that not suffice?"

ANTHONY THWAITE

Third Person

SHARING two lives, these two believe
What both hold is a third indeed:
The partner from whom both can thieve,
From whose wounds both must ebb and bleed,
Whose child uncurls, knits, labours from one seed.

Neither can claim identity.
The shared bread and the shared bed
Together build the single body
By day, by night, inherited
From what, being given, they gave back instead.

Lying together, and not still,
They run like waters into one
And every choking syllable
Gasps out their bodies' abdication,
While their unasked confederate gains the throne.

Yet good, that this can't wholly be,
That bodies break asunder when
Their separateness begs liberty,
And when, sole man beside sole woman,
Both know what each has taken, each has given.

Japan.

A. J. BULL

The Sea

IS rich in this and that, it has a past,
A present, future, no man knows the sea;
The sea takes time, and kills, and then in haste,
Smiles at the sun once more, all gaiety.
The sea is artificial, high in state,
Periwigged or curl-papered; slattern too;
It is a woman, and knows how to hate,
Fusses on favourites, makes much ado.

The sea is sneering, salt with jealousy,
Meaner than mould, returning none again;
Its lip and fruit is bitterness, few see
A harvest there, of all the faring men:
But on the rich extravagant dispensive shore
Rock follows rock, and death is white for more.

RUTH FORBES SHERRY

Native

I AM my country, I my race;
the sum of all that came before.
My forebears find abiding place
within my core.

In me the fruit of ancient seed;
the inextinguishable sperm.
The ruby sap of lineal need
defies the worm.

All bloods conjoin and inordained
rebellions, race-deep in the will,
converge in me. My blade is stained
with many a kill,

proving a configurative tale
of battle in cold crypts of mind,
while oceans toss a bellied sail
with shroud entwined,

and mountains cast a lidless eye
on nubile innocence beguiled;
on craven hearts, unfit to die;
on sorrow big with child.

Now from this wrist, the confluent stream
of centuries is freely poured;
and hero sons, born to the dream,
belt on the sword.

U.S.A.

SHIRLEY TOULSON

The Wound

FESTERS that arrow which you do not draw,
If I lack strength to pluck it with my hands,
So that my flesh corrodes and shrinks away;
Like any animal I limp apart
And huddled, silent, nurse that shrivelled heart.

So if your enemy, passing where I have hid,
Should take it in his mind to end that hurt,
Offering the sickness up to rest and death;
I'd lay that heart where he is sure to tread
And love the ecstasy which he'd stamp dead.

But do you come, and take that arrow back,
With all the sorrow of our separate selves,
I'd find myself grow into human shape;
Watching the bleeding, would rejoice the pain
That lets the new flesh grow where death has lain.

JEAN KENWARD

Poem for Andrew

THIS is the lad and this the desperado
Quitting the dark ship, vessel of foreboding,
Travelling the ancient labyrinth—whose bravado
Finds the old minataur again in hiding.

At first, small—an infinitesimal creature
Known before seen, fingered before apparent,
Not yet distinguishable in form or feature
From the first boy closed in the first parent;

Gradually assuming character
Training his ear upon air, his eye on earth,
Following wonder, feeling the senses stir,
Learning the huge initiative of birth.

Not without wisdom for the fight this stripling
Steps upon darkness where are no moons burning,
Having for weapon Faith, that incredible sapling,
And in his fist the gold thread of returning.

MURIEL GRAINGER

End of a Visit

TOMORROW I go home. But home is here—
Here in this gentle house of friendly ghosts
Who tangle up the centuries, and smile
To see us come and go. They are the hosts,
Kindly and tolerant, and we their guests,
Until we, too, have wandered out of sight,
And have become a rustling on the stair,
A shadow falling where there is no light,
And home is hence, and here, and everywhere.

ALAN SMITHIES

Estuary of the Exe

FOLLOW this river,
Follow
From the shy source among
the ling and heather,
Through moonlit moorlands
Where the curlew calls,
Then down down in the dawn
To the wide silent meadows,
The waterfalls,
The fertile valleys, the
singing thrushes,
The spires and the city walls.

Here it gains dignity,
Flowing majestically beneath old
brown bridges
That the Romans might have built,
And with a slow deliberate sure
momentum
Watched by the peerless towers,
Turns at last for the sea.

Till the sound of distant foam
Falls on the ear, the querulous cries
of gulls
And the thin high piping of oyster-
catchers
Vibrating through the heat;
In this world of glittering silver
Sea and river meet.

Making, Knowing and Judging: W. H. Auden (O.U.P., 2s. 6d.).
Poems from the North: Kathleen Nott (Hand & Flower Press, 7s. 6d.).
An American Takes a Walk: Reed Whittemore (Minnesota University Press. London-Cumberlege, 22s.).

WHATEVER he has to say, and in whatever medium, Professor Auden is never a bore. He can be irritating and stimulating, tendentious and profound, and sometimes just a little screwy; and in *Making, Knowing and Judging,* which is the text of his Oxford Inaugural Lecture, he contrives at various times to be all of these.

Modestly disclaiming any right to the title of either critic or scholar he speaks as a poet, explaining how at the age of fifteen he came to write poetry at the suggestion of a friend; then with characteristic wit and eccentricity he outlines what he considers to be the ideal training for a poet. On the subject of the apprentice poet's reading, however, he suddenly throws good sense overboard and makes the odd statement that: "Fashion and snobbery are . . . valuable as a defence against literary indigestion," but a little later he says, "The safest guide . . . is the naive uncritical principle of personal liking." The second dictum is, of course, the right one, and one wonders why Professor Auden, who is himself in danger of becoming an unfashionable author, bothered to formulate the first.

He is excellent when elaborating a theory of the creative process deriving from Coleridge's concept of the primary and secondary imaginations, and one is always aware of his unfailing absorption in the craft and skills of verse-making, and of his total self-dedication to his art.

Miss Kathleen Nott would benefit from the careful study and practice of verse techniques, for many of her *Poems from the North* seem to have proceeded from the notion that heavy alliteration and grammatical inversions are enough to transmute prose into poetry. Repeatedly one finds that the structure of the sentences bears no relation to the rhythmic pattern imposed upon them which is constantly being broken down by the massive and involuted periods. In one poem, *Old Love New Discovered,* chosen at random, the last thirty-two lines are one vast and (to me) impenetrable sentence of a dozen or more clauses and umpteen phrases spread over four stanzas, the form of which seems wholly arbitrary. Despite one or two passages of effective description Miss Nott's lack of rhythmic invention, the imprecision of her imagery and her obvious infatuation with dialectics suggest that her true metier is prose.

Mr. Whittemore is a different proposition altogether. He has obviously learnt a lot from Wallace Stevens, Pound and Cummings, but he has digested his influences well, and while he makes no utterance of great moment he is always witty, resourceful and readable. I enjoyed his verses and I am grateful for them, for as Professor Auden says, "Masterpieces should be kept for High Holidays of the Spirit." Still, a guinea plus seems an awful lot for these weekday titbits.

VERNON SCANNELL.

The Source and Other Poems : Katherine Watson (O.U.P., 8s. 6d.).
The Greenhouse in the Garden : Charles Edward Eaton (Twayne Publishers, $2.75).
Poems : Robert Conquest (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.).

MISS WATSON has a finely perceptive talent and her religious evocations are as tautly sincere as the best poems of Hopkins who is so obviously her inspiration. Indeed, at first casual reading much of her work appears to be nothing more than imitation.

"Enclosed : does no-one know it waits quite innocent within
Thorn-ring of scorn, chevaux-de-frise of torment, even? is
Beneath hard armadillo hide of shown indifference,
Live tender? vulnerable, a naked quick is, under
Stickle, hackle-up of pride?
Claws, rends the crueller, is wild, for cause
Of gentlest child inside?"

But there is more to Miss Watson than imitation. She has so absorbed the spirit as well as the pattern of Hopkin's poetry that her own poems in the same tradition stand firm and resilient, original creations in their own right; poems that despite their affinities Hopkins could never have written.

This is Miss Watson's first book of poems and I anticipate that as her talent matures, her debt to the incomparable Jesuit will become less obvious, and her own individual genius more apparent.

Mr. Eaton is a young American poet and his book is altogether a different kettle of poetry. Flowers are his symbols and their colours bedizen his work : white, red, green and gold predominate. His approach is meditative and his themes are essentially problems of person to person relationships. He prefers the long elastic line weighted by rhymes that occasionally hang too heavily for freedom of the movement that is inseparable from success in this type of poetry; the most satisfying poems in the book use a shorter line and less contrived rhymes.

This is his third published volume of poetry and it is, perhaps, a measure of failure that there is still more of promise in his work

than of fulfilment. The wastage of promising young talent must be higher in poetry than in any other of the arts and one can only hope that both Miss Watson and Mr. Eaton survive.

About Mr. Conquest's poetry I could not, I fear, care less. It qualifies as a minor contribution to the empty cerebrations of our Lucky Jims and Immature Jennies. His evocations of places are often excellent but they are empty of people; his poems contain some wit and a little wisdom but—and this arid collection of intellectual genuflexions drives me to emotional extremes—where, oh where is his heart? And what, in the name of Empson, does he use for a soul?

B. Evan Owen.

The Rudiment of an Eye : W. Price Turner (Villiers, 5s.).
The Tunnelled Fire : Alexander Henderson (Secker & Warburg, 10s. 6d.).
Friday's Child : Wilfred Watson (Faber & Faber, 9s. 6d.).

ALL the blatant trombones of publicity massing in support of a handful of scrannel pipes cannot obstruct, for anyone who has the rudiment of an ear, the clear themes announced from time to time by individuals outside the cartel. Mr. Price Turner, for example, is an orchestra in himself: the melody of vowel sounds combined with a notable ingenuity in the use of consonants provide a most satisfying music: the *Back-Court Piper* produces deep harmonies beyond the drone and chanter. One of his minor qualities is, that in spite of being surrounded by sadness, amusement, and squalor—all well described—under the "smoke-marred sky" of Govan, he abjures the peculiar barbed-wire of what Smollett called the Scotch dialect, to write in straightforward well-ordered English.

Mr. Henderson's thirty-odd poems seem to be the valuable product of up to twenty years' work. He is fluent, suave, inventive, assured; he uses both the long and the short line well; he prefers the safe click of rhyme, though when he avoids it there seems more depth and even meaning. The poems on Love, "the tunnelled fire," are outstanding in their comprehension and lack of either lust or sentimentality. The longish poem, *A Childhood,* has already been much praised; several pieces are such as another De La Mare might conceive, starting afresh among the horrors of the modern world; and these pages contain a number of memorable lines and sensible sensitive images. "O weight of windows and your netted shoal of skies!"

Mr. Watson is a Canadian for whom Messrs. Faber and Faber have opened their doors. Canada is not specifically obvious in his poems, while Dylan Thomas and Yeats are. There is much variety

here, both of subject matter and of technique. The spare ribs of *The Boy and the Shepherds* are as well dissected as is the intricate body of the *Ballad of Mother and Son.* If there is a touch of pastiche and the precious in such titles as *Of Hendrickje as Bathsheba* and *For Anne, Who Brought Tulips,* there is ample compensation in the poems themselves. It is probably relevant to quarrel with the deliberate naivety of rhyme here and there, yet in the main these poems, with such baubles to play with as "poor Turleygod Thomas", the cougar that "pads out love's melancholy", "the queen of tarts", Orpheus and Euridice, St. Lucy, Maude Gonne, Elsie Jack, and Emily Carr, are a bright and worthwhile collection.

HUGH CREIGHTON HILL.

Sea Climate : J. Phoenice (Glenn Coffield, U.S.A., 2s. 6d.).

The Doubtful Crown : John Caspall (Outposts Publications, 2s. 6d.).

The Lynx-Eyed Strangers : Mabel Ferrett (Outposts Publications, 2s. 6d.).

MISS PHOENICE has a pleasing outlook and writes well of the life of the Northumbrian countryside, though occasionally she lapses into sentimentality. Her most obvious weakness is a tendency to over-dramatize her emotions—"I taste all sweetness in a single hour"; "submerged me in a wave of grief", etc.—when the subject hardly justifies her somewhat inflated language. She is on safer ground in her less ambitious pieces, *Farm in the Valley* and *On a Lionel Edwards Print.*

The first two booklets from OUTPOSTS PUBLICATIONS are tastefully produced and it is to be hoped that this series will obtain all the support it deserves. Mr. John Caspall's sense of rhythm and his use of imagery, though a little erratic at present, show that he has a genuine talent if he will only allow it to break through; for the shadow of Sidney Keyes lies across his poetry, especially the title-poem which has its parallel in the well-known *Advice for a Journey* and a tone which reminds the reader of Keyes's "windy foodless meadows of despair". However, in the *Trojan Elegy* sequence, which I assume to be his later work, he speaks with his own voice.

The Lynx-Eyed Strangers is of a surprisingly high standard for a first collection and thoroughly justifies the aim of the OUTPOSTS series, that of encouraging young and unestablished poets who have real potentiality and calling attention to their work. In many ways Mrs. Mabel Ferrett is already a mature poet and she has a wide range of form, subject and mood. Her "lynx-eyed strangers" (poetic experiences) are equally at ease with children, the sculptures in Battersea Park, the armed forces in Korea and Dr. Edith Sitwell, or seen against the historical backgrounds of Bolton Castle and Fountains Abbey. It is true that in some of her work there is a suggestion of naivety, but as this adds an attractive air of innocence appropriate to the poems in which it appears (*i.e., Song* and *Clovelly*) one may well suspect that this is a technical device she has learned to use with advantage.

More will undoubtedly be heard of these three poets.

JOHN SEYMOUR.

The Simon Passion: Henry Birnbaum (Olivant House, U.S.A., 50c.).

Little Pagan: Eric Ratcliffe (the author, 1s. 0d.).

Not to Lethe: Roye McCoye, 2s.

Thanksgiving: and *The Search*, John Hoffman (Guild Press, 3s. 6d.).

NINETEEN hundred years ago the satirist Persius was moved to ask who made the parrot so ready to say Hello, and his Monitor pointed out that there might be two readers or none for his verses.

The urge to write requires a consummation in printing: and after that, what? Under discussion here are five pamphlets by four very different poets, each crying Hello, each asking for some recognition.

Henry Birnbaum, touching on his education and childhood, "Assembles learning to his need / And removes body from his quest", finally asking for love and the hand of God in verse which is always competent; Eric Ratcliffe continually finds an unconscious revelation of the Primitive in minor actions and incidents, and at times achieves an excellent synthesis in sparkling lines; Roye McCoye, watching "words spin, ring and rise and . . . spill from my fibbing, truthful tongue", peers into closed houses as did the Devil on Two Sticks, making sad poems musical with pity and nostalgia; John Hoffman, balancing shadow and substance, the physical and the spiritual, pours out a flood of words and images to try to come to terms with earth and heaven, avoiding the Kindred Points by insisting on the value of his own vision and actions.

All four have said Hello, have done their best to bring their verse "to the consecrated repositories of the poets", as Persius did.

Who reads Persius? Who is now about to read these unrecognised four? It must be stated unequivocally that it is impossible to judge a Movement or speculate on the Spirit of the Age without taking into full consideration the work of those who lack the influence and publicity of the oversponsored.

HUGH CREIGHTON HILL.

NOTICES

POEMS INVITED. A national magazine experimenting with the publication of poetry for the first time has given the Editor of *Outposts* the task of selecting suitable material. Payment is exceptionally good. Poems of not more than 20 lines are invited and should be sent (together with stamped addressed envelope) to Howard Sergeant at the *Outposts* address.

ARTS COUNCIL POETRY PRIZES. The prize of 100 guineas for the best book of original verse published by a living poet during the period 1st July, 1953, to 30th June, 1956, has been awarded to R. S. Thomas for his *Song at the Year's Turning* (Hart-Davis), and prizes of 100 guineas each have been awarded to J. P. Fletcher for *Tally* 300 (Hand & Flower Press) and Wilfred Watson for *Friday's Child* (Faber), as the best first books of original English verse published by living poets during the same period.

BORESTONE MOUNTAIN POETRY AWARDS. Howard Sergeant has been appointed British Editor for BORESTONE MOUNTAIN POETRY AWARDS. His function is to cover all the magazines published in the British Isles and select the most outstanding poems for recommendation to the Editorial Board. In order to do this as thoroughly as possible he invites readers to co-operate with him by drawing his attention to outstanding poems printed in British magazines since 1st January, 1956, and to inform him of the appearance of any new magazines. There are valuable prizes for the best three poems and a selection of the remainder will be published in the annual anthology.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC & POETRY CIRCLE. Poets reading their latest verse, and critics, editors, and anthologists, presenting poems that are specially interesting them, can be heard at the gatherings of the Contemporary Music and Poetry Circle, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, Kensington High Street, on the second Monday of every month. Monthly circulars on application to Alec Craig, 5 Avenue House, Belsize Park Gardens.